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ABSTRACT

This guide has been developed to help parents understand the reading section of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, the revised state reading curriculum which is intended to make sure that every student learns to read and write well. The guide offers general tips on helping each child, as well as terminology and research information that may be unfamiliar to parents--a glossary at the back of the guide defines many of the unfamiliar terms. According to the guide, North Carolina uses a "balanced reading program" which includes: knowing each student individually; balancing direct instruction with other learning opportunities (indirect instruction); and a balanced emphasis on skills and meaning. The guide contains sections on: (1) Pre-Reading: Early Emergent Literacy; (2) Kindergarten: Emergent Literacy; (3) First Grade: Developing Literacy; (4) Second Grade: Early Independent Literacy; and (5) Third Grade: Independent Literacy. It also outlines reading grade level competencies, and spelling and writing competencies for grades K-3. (NKA)

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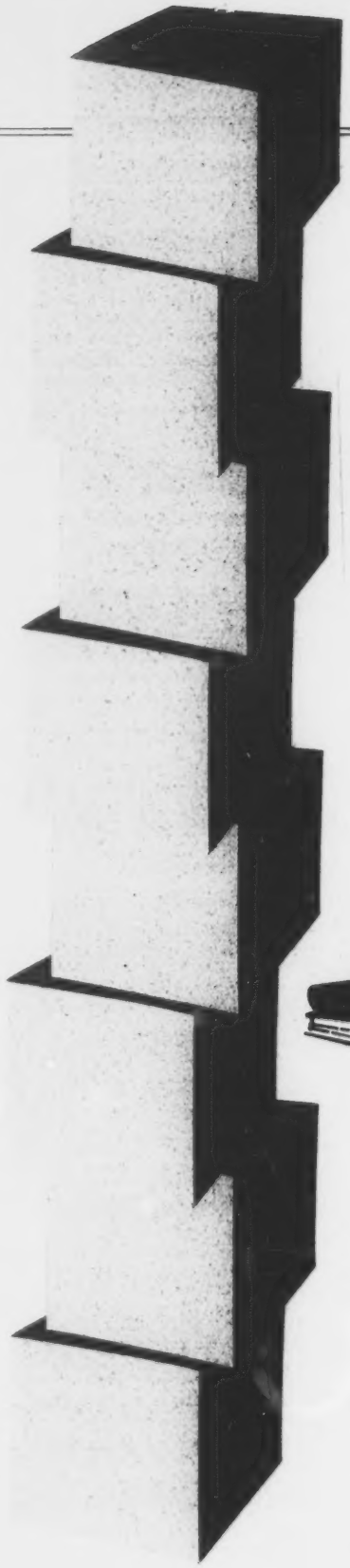

On A Word... ...Read!!!

A Guide for Parents of Elementary Readers in North Carolina Public Schools

Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education . Department of Public Instruction
1999

CS 013 739

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On A Word...Read!!!

Dear Fellow Parents,

This booklet is about one of the most important things in our children's lives – learning to read! While learning to read well is a very complex process, research tells us that virtually every child (free from serious handicaps) can accomplish this. Today, too many of our capable children are not learning to read and write as well as they should.

The revised state reading curriculum, *The NC Standard Course of Study*, is intended to make sure that every student learns to read and write well enough to take an active part in our society, to function effectively in the world of work, and to realize personal fulfillment as young adults. This parent guide has been developed to help you understand the reading section of *The NC Standard Course of Study*. In addition to general tips on helping your child, you will find terminology and research information that may be unfamiliar. A glossary at the back of this document defines many of the unfamiliar terms. We believe it is important for parents to learn this new terminology, just as we learn medical terms, to help us understand, support and advocate for our children.

Your comments and suggestions regarding the usefulness of this guide are welcome. For additional information about the NC reading curriculum and other sources of information, please contact: Mike Frye, English Language Arts Section, NC Department of Public Instruction at (919) 715-1698.

Sincerely,
The Parent Document Advisory Committee

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On A Word...Read! *is a guide for parents. In these pages you will find information about the NC English Language Arts Standard Course of Study (SCS) and tips on what to expect from your child's teacher and in your child's classroom. Please notice the lists of what you can expect your child to be able to do at each grade level, kindergarten through grade three. Use this information to understand and evaluate your child's instructional program and progress. You will also find interesting research about how children learn to read. This important information can serve as a guide for understanding the best learning activities for your child, both at school and at home.*

Look for the ✔ and take an active part in reading!

North Carolina uses a Balanced Reading Program which includes:

- knowing each student individually;
- balancing direct instruction with other learning opportunities (indirect instruction);
- a balanced emphasis on skills and meaning.

When teachers – or parents! – teach specific information or processes to students, that is **direct instruction**.

Indirect instruction includes students' reading alone or with a buddy, working on the computer or keeping a journal.

Pre-Reading: Early Emergent Literacy

Parents can prepare young children to be successful readers by helping them develop **pre-reading skills.**

✓ Help your child begin to recognize letter names and sounds...

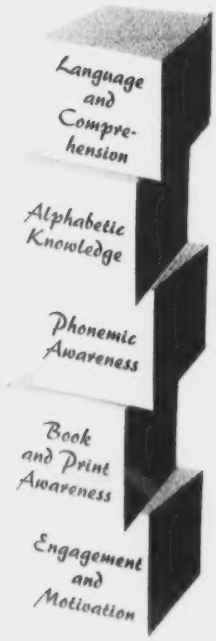
Point out and name individual letters (upper and lower case) on cereal boxes, toys, buildings, etc.
Sing ABC songs.
Play with magnetic letters on the refrigerator.

✓ Help your child develop sound awareness...

Sound out the sounds of letters in three-letter words: i.e. c-a-t or b-i-g.
Read nursery rhymes and Dr. Seuss books aloud.
Play word games. "How many words can you think of that rhyme with *BAG?...LIGHT?...COOK?* How many words can you think of that start with the sound *ch?*"

✓ Help your child become familiar with books and other printed material...

Point out words on the page as you read aloud.
Talk about the top and bottom of the page.



✓ Help your child develop comprehension...

Ask your child to predict what might happen next in a story.
Ask your child to tell you his or her favorite part in a story.
Make a connection between things that happen in a story and experiences your child has had.
"That was a nice story about farm animals. Remember when we went to...and we saw baby pigs."
Talk about new words, use them in conversation and encourage your child to use them, too.

Since learning to read begins early in a child's life, long before formal instruction at school, literary experiences that parents provide for their children get them off to a better start with reading.

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✔ Read Aloud!

Read books with predictable patterns and rhyme.
Read books that stretch the imagination.
Read books that relate to your child's life experiences.

Reading aloud is one of the most important activities you can do with your young child. As you sit with your child while reading a book, your child begins to associate reading with warmth and pleasure. Your child sees the way you turn the pages and begins to make the connection between your words and the words and pictures on the page.

When students listen to stories or books read to them, they experience a richness of ideas and language too difficult for them to read alone, giving them a sense of the patterns of the written word, making them more motivated and more inclined to develop a love of reading.

✔ Encourage Drawing & Writing!

Drawing is important to young children as they begin to express their ideas on paper. When your child draws a picture, he or she is playing with language and ideas. Young children love to try to write, too, and they enjoy pretending to make lists, take messages, and send notes.

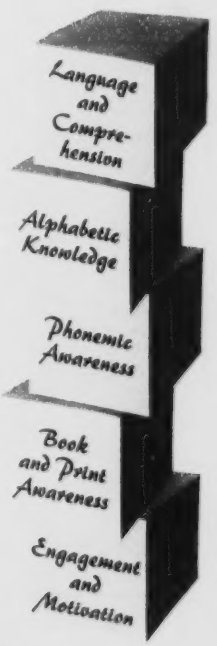
Some children have experienced as many as 1,000 hours of informal reading and writing opportunities before they come to school. They have been read to, they have watched adults read and write, they have tried to write themselves, and they have talked about environmental print such as signs and labels.

Quiz

1000 hours would equal how many minutes per day for the first five years of a child's life?

A. 60 minutes
B. 33 minutes
C. 90 minutes
D. 15 minutes

Answer b



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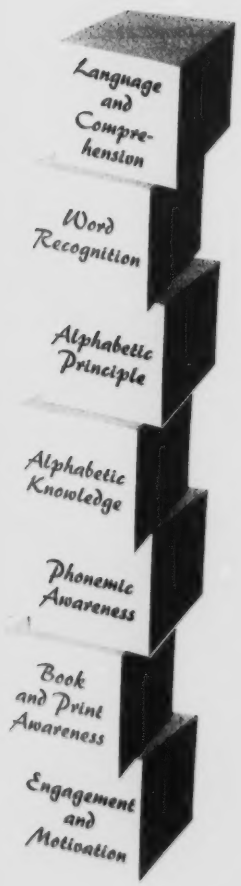
Kindergarten: Emergent Literacy

You can expect your Kindergarten student to...

- Know the parts of books and the function of each part.
- Know that print is read from left to right.
- Recognize and name lower and upper case letters of the alphabet.
- Show an understanding of the sounds of most letters.
- Begin to blend letter-sounds in one-syllable words.
- Use new vocabulary and language in speech.
- Enjoy listening to stories.
- Talk about his or her favorite books or stories.
- Hear and learn rhymes, songs, poems, and word games.
- Write to express ideas.
- Write using some knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

What will you see in your child's classroom?

- The alphabet
- Lots of books
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Comfortable places to read alone or in small groups
- Room for storytelling for the whole class
- Maybe a puppet stage
- Children reading, drawing, writing, telling, listening



What will you see in your home?

- Magnetic letters or alphabet blocks
- Lots of favorite books
- Youth magazines, comics
- Child's section of the newspaper
- Comfortable places to read alone or with family
- Room for storytelling
- Puppets
- Your children reading, drawing, writing, telling, listening!!

Quiz!

My child may show knowledge of sounds and letters by playing which kind of games?
A. letter recognition games
B. clapping syllables
C. rhyming games
D. all of the above

Answer: d

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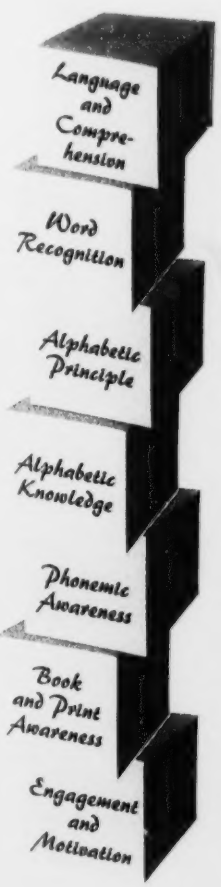
Research shows these factors of emergent literacy are heavily correlated with later reading success:

- **Print awareness** (knowledge of how printed material looks and works), for example: *The child is aware that words are comprised of letters.*
- **Alphabetic knowledge** (recognition of the shapes, names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet), for example: *The child can identify the letters of the alphabet and knows the sounds the letters represent.*
- **Phonemic awareness** (the insight that spoken words and syllables are themselves made up of strings of still smaller sounds, the phonemes), for example: *The child is able to hear three sounds in the word "sat."*
- **Alphabetic principle** (the understanding that letters of written words represent the sounds of spoken words), for example: *The child writes "sat" (not "fat" or "bat") when asked to write the word "sat."*

However, research shows that these factors are weak predictors of a child's reading success:

- *IQ*
- *Mental age*
- *Race*
- *Parents' level of education*
- *Left or right handedness and perceptual styles.*



Quiz!

Phonemes are:

a) miniature telephones
b) the smallest sound segments in a word
c) popular breakfast cereal
d) 1950's singing group

Answer: b

An awareness of phonemes is essential to making sense of the logic of our writing system. In the early stages of its development, phonemic awareness does not involve written letters or words and is therefore not synonymous with phonics. In later stages; however, phonemic awareness and phonics appear to be mutually reinforcing.

✓ Ways to strengthen phonemic awareness

Play rhyming games with your children. Play "I Spy" with phonemes: "I spy with my little eye, something blue that begins with the 's' sound." Read poems, nursery rhymes, and silly stories that have fun with language sounds.

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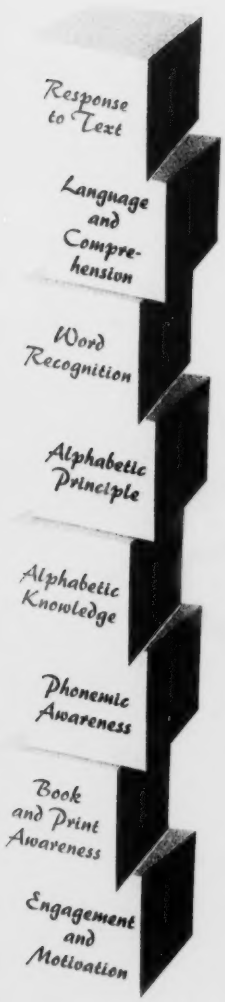
First Grade: Developing Literacy

You can expect your First Grade student to...

- Use phonics knowledge to read one-syllable words.
- Recognize many common words that can't be sounded out with phonics, such as *have, said, where,* and *two.*
- Read first-grade books aloud, with fluency and understanding.
- Segment and blend the phonemes of one-syllable words.
- Read and understand simple written instructions.
- Participate in discussions of stories and short informational text.
- Begin writing about personal experiences, stories, and information learned from books.



Phonics helps children spell while writing and decode words while reading. All students need phonics, but not necessarily the same instructional materials or the same amount of time.

Research shows that first graders whose phonics is reinforced with decodable texts (text in which new words can be sounded out with the phonics that the children have been taught) not only retain their phonics lessons better but extend their knowledge of spelling patterns beyond what has been taught.

Complementing children's early phonics lessons with practice in reading decodable books greatly eases their movement into text with no vocabulary control later in first-grade year.

Time spent on early phonics instruction must be balanced to allow appropriate time spent on reading comprehension, fluency, and writing. Teachers will help your child understand the importance of both skills and meaning.

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✓ Ways to strengthen decoding:

When reading together, take opportunities to call your child's attention to the letter-sounds that are encountered in books. Invite your child to try to sound out well-chosen decodable words encountered in books. Encourage your child to write – it is a powerful way to teach letter-sound relationships. Ask your child to use phonics to spell while writing as well as to decode new words when reading.

✓ Ways to strengthen comprehension:

Read aloud together every day. Talk with your child about what has been read. Make sure your young reader has time every day for independent reading. Listen to your child's opinions. Ask your child questions. Listen to the answers. Encourage your child to re-read favorite stories.

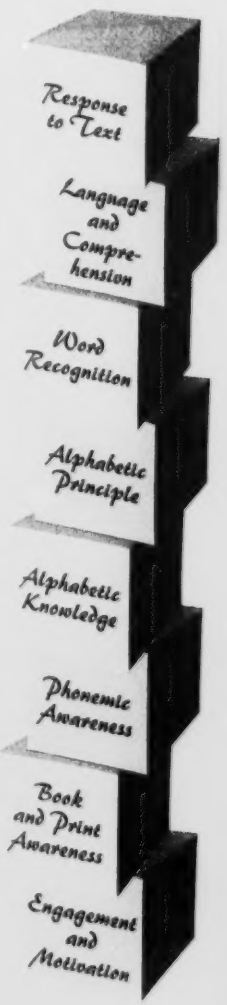
General characteristics of systematic phonics:

- Short but frequent teacher-led lessons
- The introduction, review and application of an initially limited but growing set of letter-sound relationships
- Instruction in blending
- Correlated work in spelling

Learning phonics is essential. Phonics is the system of letter-sound relationships used in reading and writing. Research shows that early phonics instruction produces students with superior word-identification skills which is a desirable outcome of a balanced reading program. In addition, phonics knowledge supports spelling development. The most effective phonics instruction takes care to clarify key points and principles to students, gradually builds from basic elements to more subtle and complex patterns, and conveys the logic of the system to invite its extension to new words.

A general developmental continuum for phonics and spelling instruction begins with rhyming and the development of phonemic awareness in kindergarten. It continues with focus on short vowels, common consonants and consonant blends, and a few high-frequency long-vowel patterns – all for single-syllable words in first grade.

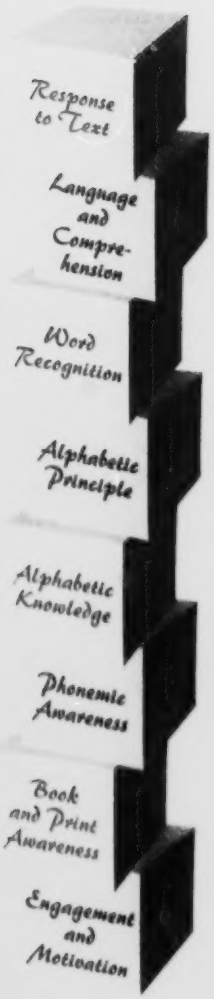
Efficient readers must be able to "break the code" that relates the spelling of a word to its sound and meaning so quickly and accurately that the decoding process coordinates smoothly with the process of constructing meaning. Fast and accurate word identification is thus correlated with strong reading comprehension.



Second Grade: Early Independent Literacy

You can expect your Second Grade student to...

- Use phonics knowledge to decode multi-syllable words.
- Read second-grade books aloud with fluency and understanding.
- Read a variety of different types of text in different content areas.
- Read longer passages of text.
- Ask how...? why...? and what-if...? questions after reading.
- Remember and retell facts and details from a book.
- Begin to develop "favorites" – favorite topics, favorite authors, favorite books.
- Be assigned independent reading for homework.
- Correctly spell, using previously studied words and spelling patterns.
- Attend to correct spelling, mechanics, and format in final drafts of writing.
- Write stories about their experiences.
- Write informational reports on topics of interest.



There should be a strong connection between reading and writing, not only because children who read become better writers and children who write become better readers, but also because the reading and writing connection increases engagement and motivation. Because reading and writing are so interrelated, students use temporary spelling as a means of developing and reinforcing knowledge of phonics. The use of temporary spelling is an effective, essential stage in the developmental progression toward becoming an independent reader and writer. Temporary spelling is temporary, however; students do need to learn how to spell conventionally. Temporary spelling of common spelling patterns should progress toward more conventional spelling by the second grade, with students' mastering the conventional spelling of increasing numbers of words. In addition to direct instruction on spelling, extensive reading and writing for real purposes, including opportunities to edit for final publication, are invaluable in helping students become good spellers.

✔ Ways to strengthen writing

Provide a chalkboard or bulletin board for all family members to write messages and notes.
Allow your child to help write lists for shopping, instructions for baby sitters, directions for visitors, plans for events.
Ask your children to write thank-you notes for gifts they receive.
Encourage your child to write and draw cards to send to relatives and friends for special events.

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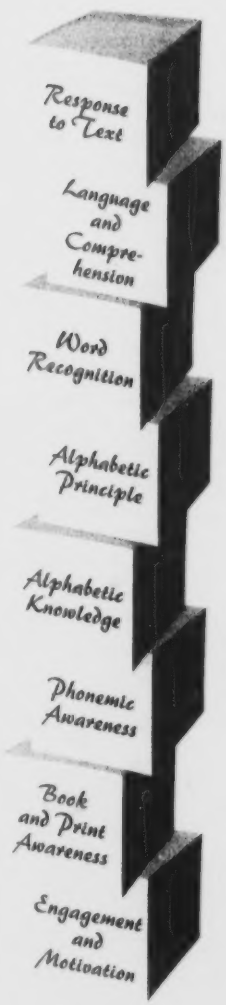
A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.
– Chinese proverb

✓ Ways to keep your child reading:

Go to the library together.
Research a topic of interest together.
Check out books on topics your child enjoys.
Check that books are written on your child's reading level.
Encourage your child to read to younger siblings.
Read adventure stories.
Ask your child to read the newspaper and express a reaction to a story.
Take turns reading funny stories or riddles aloud.
Suggest your favorite book to your child.
Turn off the TV.
Continue to read aloud to your child.
Begin a family DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) program at home – even if it's for 15 minutes a day.



Choosing the appropriate level of reading material is important in encouraging your child to read. A quick and easy way to start matching a child with a book is to have the child read a few sentences or pages. In independent reading, a child should be able to read 95 to 100 percent of the words correctly. Frustration level reading involves high error rates, an 89 percent, or below, level of accuracy. Encouraging a love of reading is difficult when reading is frustrating for the child.

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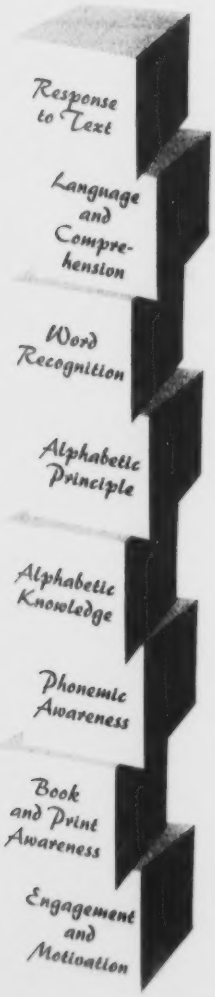
Third Grade: Independent Literacy

You can expect your Third Grade student to...

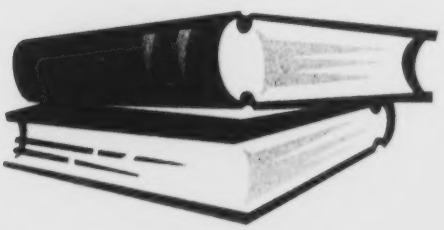
- Have mastery of phonics knowledge.
- Read at grade level with fluency, accuracy and understanding.
- Understand cause and effect.
- Recognize the difference between fact and opinion.
- Read for a variety of reasons.
- Use details in the text to check for understanding.
- Have an opinion about favorite books and authors.
- Know when text makes no sense to them and take actions to correct such as re-reading.
- Use titles, graphics, captions, and charts to support comprehension.
- Write a variety of literary, informational, and practical texts (fairy tales, poetry, recipes, news articles, interviews, etc.)



Third graders will be reading in science, mathematics and social studies – reading to learn (which is different from learning to read).

To be successful taking the North Carolina Third Grade End-of-Grade Test, students must be able to read longer passages (one to two typed pages of approximately 1,000 words) with fluency and understanding.

Your child should also be independently reading a variety of materials – informational books, children's newspapers, recipes, chapter books, fiction, brochures, and poetry.



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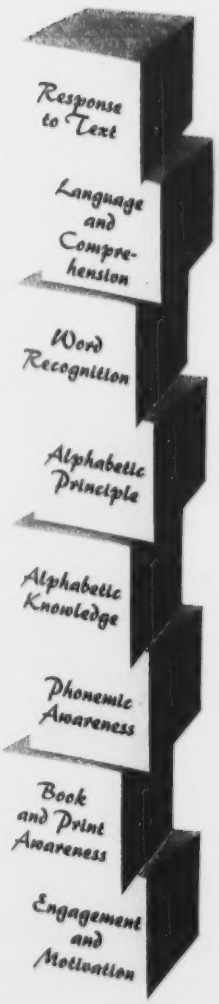
How students will be asked to show what they know...

A multiple-choice test is one way your child can demonstrate what he or she has learned. Other kinds of assessments also let students demonstrate that they are able to use what they have learned. Reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing are processes that make it possible for learners to think, investigate and increase knowledge in all subject areas – as well as demonstrate what they have learned. Assessments, which are more than just tests, include multiple methods to evaluate children's progress and show what they understand and what they can do:

Answering open-ended questions
Writing reports
Participating in debates
Taking part in investigations
Creating demonstrations
Answering multiple-choice questions

Assessments will identify your child's developmental stage. Classroom instruction must be aligned to your child's needs and developmental stage. Ask your child's teacher, during a parent-teacher conference, to explain all assessment findings, the instructional strategies planned for your child, and how to know your child is making the expected progress.



Parent-Teacher Conferences

In a parent-teacher conference, you can learn about your child's reading performance. Parent-teacher conferences will help you:

- Understand precisely what your child is supposed to learn based on curriculum content standards;
- Know your child's reading level (above, at, or below grade level);
- Understand assessments and your child's strengths and weaknesses;
- Understand how the instructional program meets the specific needs of your child;
- Understand the expected growth goals for your child;
- Understand what you can do at home to help your child.

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What If...

...you are concerned about your child's reading skills or your child's motivation to read, or

...you don't think your child is mastering the Grade Level Competencies listed on pages 20-22.

Don't Delay. Don't wait for your child to "grow out of it."

Communicate with your child's teacher (by telephone, note, or after-school visit).

Schedule a conference with the people responsible for your child's academic progress (the teacher, guidance counselor, specialist).

Ask the teacher to describe your child's stage of reading development based on objective tests and subjective observation.

Ask the teacher to provide a plan with specific strategies for the home and school to work cooperatively towards your child's grade level reading development.

The expectation should be for your child to receive appropriate instructional support and to move as quickly as possible to grade level reading.

> Research shows that if schools delay intervention until age 7 for children experiencing difficulty, 75% will continue having difficulties.
>
> (Adams, Beginning to Read, 1990)

Plan to have a follow-up parent-teacher conference a few weeks later to talk about whether the plan is producing positive results.

When parents want additional help and information, they can consult the principal, central office curriculum specialists, the superintendent, and local board of education members.

The North Carolina Standard Course of Study is clear about the type of instruction beginning (emergent) or struggling readers need:

Both direct instruction and extended exploration of print awareness, alphabetic knowledge, and phonemic awareness in real reading and writing are necessary for developing emergent literacy. However, different children will require different levels of direct instruction, with some children needing more explicit instruction and more repeated experiences. Children who are not already reading and who cannot successfully decode need phonemic awareness, explicit instruction in the fundamental letter-sound associations, and opportunity to practice in text that they can decode and that is at an individually appropriate level of difficulty. Meanwhile, read-alouds and guided reading sessions should be maintained to ensure ample experience with meaningful, rich literacy and language.

One of this country's most respected reading researchers, Dr. Marilyn Jager Adams, confirms the recommendations given in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study:

"For all but 1% to 3% of children, reading disability can be prevented through well-designed early instruction. What constitutes "well-designed instruction"? [After decades of research we know that] the most effective instructional approaches are those in which phonics instruction is included alongside an ample emphasis on meaning, language instruction, and connected reading... Approaches that include a systematically organized and explicitly taught program of phonics result in significantly better word recognition, better spelling, better vocabulary, and better reading comprehension."

(Adams, *Annals of Dyslexia*, 1997, Vol. 47, pp. 226, 267.)

Glossary

Alphabetic knowledge	Recognition of the shapes, names, and sounds of the letters of the alphabet.
Blending	Merging the component letter-sounds of a word in pronouncing the word.
Consonant	All letters that are not vowels. Consonants are the speech sounds that are the result of partial or near complete blockage of the flow of air as it passes through the speaker's breath channel.
Consonant blend	A sequence of two or more consonants in a word, each of which retains its distinct sound when the word is pronounced (i.e. the pl in plant or the str in stream).
Decodable text	Text that is mostly comprised of words containing the letter-sound relationships that have already been taught.
Decode	The process of using knowledge of letter-sound relationships to convert the printed word into its spoken form.
Explicit phonics instruction	The sounds associated with letters are identified in isolation and then blended together to form words.
Grade level competencies	Descriptions of what students should know and be able to do consistently and accurately by the end of a grade level. (See pages 20-22.)
Implicit phonics instruction	The sound associated with a letter is not pronounced in isolation. Rather, letter-sound relationships are taught within the context of whole words.
Phonemes	The smallest sound segments in a word.
Phonemic awareness	The insight that spoken words and syllables are themselves comprised of strings of still smaller sounds, the phonemes.
Phonics	The system of letter-sound relationships used in reading and writing.
Print awareness	Knowledge of how printed material looks and works.
Temporary spelling	A child's attempt to spell words as he or she is learning to read and write. These spellings reflect generalizations about written language and the child's current level of understanding of letter-sound relationships. ("Conventional spelling" refers to the dictionary spelling of a word.)
Vowel	The letters a,e,i,o,u and y are used singly or in combination to represent the vowel sounds. Vowels are speech sounds produced by the unobstructed flow of air through the speaker's breath channel.

Background Information

In 1996, Senate Bill 1139 was passed in the North Carolina legislature requiring the State Board of Education to develop a comprehensive plan to improve reading achievement in the public schools.

According to the Bill, the plan shall:

- Be based on reading instructional practices for which there is strong evidence of effectiveness in existing empirical scientific research studies on reading development;
- If appropriate, include revision of the Standard Course of Study, revision of teacher certification standards, and revision of teacher education program standards;
- Include early and systematic phonics instruction;
- Emphasize balanced, integrated, effective programs of reading instruction; and
- Promote local flexibility and efficiency.

The State Board of Education Program/Reading Committee was given the task of developing the reading plan. The work of the Committee included surveys of parents and teachers, focus groups across the state and consultation with reading experts from North Carolina and across the nation.

The Committee discovered widespread agreement in several areas:

- While early systematic phonics instruction is an essential element in learning to read, phonics instruction alone is not sufficient for children's literacy learning;
- All children need instruction in phonics, yet no one set of materials guarantees success for all children;
- Materials and strategies should meet the needs of individual students;
- Elementary teachers must be well trained to teach both systematic phonics and comprehension. Teachers must be prepared to identify the individual needs of students through diagnostic testing and classroom observation and providing instruction that best meets those needs.

The Committee's extensive review of the scientific research on reading led to the 1997 revised NC English Language Arts Standard Course of Study (SCS), a curriculum document which every public school must follow (Public Law GS 115C-81), and to the publication of this parent document. You may review the SCS at your local school or administrative office, or purchase the SCS through DPI Publications (919) 715-1018 or 1-800-663-1250.

The NC English Language Arts Grade Level Competencies for Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third Grades are included in the Standard Course of Study, Appendix C and are included at the back of this publication on pp. 20-22.

For more information, contact your child's teacher, your local school system, or you may call the Department of Public Instruction at (919) 715-1000.

Reading Grade Level Competencies

Kindergarten

Book and Print Awareness

- Knows parts of books and functions of each part.
- Demonstrates understanding of directionality and voice-print match by following print word for word when listening to familiar text read aloud.
- Demonstrates understanding of letters, words, and story.

Phonemic Awareness/Alphabetic Principle

Phonemic Awareness

- Demonstrates understanding that spoken language is a sequence of identifiable speech sounds.
- Demonstrates understanding that words begin and end alike (onsets and rimes).

Alphabetic Principle

- Demonstrates understanding that the sequence of letters in the written word represents the sequence of sounds in the spoken word.
- Demonstrates understanding of the sounds of letters.

Decoding and Word Recognition

- Recognizes and names upper and lower case letters of the alphabet.
- Recognizes some words by sight including a few common words, own name, and environmental print such as signs, labels, and trademarks.
- Recognizes most beginning consonant letter-sound associations in one-syllable words.

Language, Comprehension, and Response to Text

- Uses new vocabulary and language in own speech.
- Understands and follows oral/graphic directions.
- Demonstrates sense of story (e.g., beginning, middle, end, characters, details).
- Connects information and events in text to experience.
- Demonstrates familiarity with a variety of types of books and selections.
- Reads or begins to read.

First Grade

Phonemic Awareness

- Can blend the phonemes of one-syllable words.
- Can segment the phonemes of one-syllable words.
- Can count the syllables in a word.
- Can change beginning, middle, and ending sounds to produce new words.

Decoding and Word Recognition

- Uses phonics knowledge of sound-letter relationships to decode regular one-syllable words when reading words and text.
- Recognizes many high frequency and/or common irregularly spelled words in text (e.g., have, said, where, two).
- Reads aloud with fluency and comprehension any text that is appropriately designed for the first half of grade one.
- Uses pronunciation, sentence meaning, story meaning, and syntax to confirm accurate decoding or to self-correct errors.

Language, Comprehension, and Response to Text

- Reads and comprehends both narrative and expository text appropriate for grade one.
- Self-monitors in decoding, comprehending, and composing text by using one or two strategies.
- Elaborates on how information and events connect to life experiences.
- Reads and understands simple written instructions.
- Predicts and explains what will happen next in stories.
- Discusses and explains responses to how, why, and what-if questions in sharing narrative and expository texts.
- Retells new information in own words.
- Understands the concept of a sentence.
- Responds and elaborates in answering what, when, where, and how questions.
- Uses new vocabulary and language in both speech and writing.
- Demonstrates familiarity with a variety of types of text (e.g., storybooks, poems, newspapers, telephone books, and everyday print such as signs, notices, labels).

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Reading Grade Level Competencies

Second Grade

Third Grade

Decoding and Word Recognition

- Uses phonics knowledge and structural analysis (e.g., knowledge of syllables, suffixes, prefixes, root words) to decode regular multi-syllable words when reading text.
- Accurately reads most high frequency and many irregularly spelled words in text.
- Reads aloud with fluency and comprehension any text appropriate for the first half of grade two.

Language, Comprehension, and Response to Text

- Reads and comprehends both narrative and expository text that is appropriate for grade two.
- Self-monitors own difficulties in decoding, comprehending, and composing text by using several strategies.
- Interprets information from diagrams, charts, and maps.
- Recalls facts and details from text.
- Reads expository materials for answers to specific questions.
- Discusses similarities and differences in events and characters across stories.
- Connects and compares information across expository selections to experience and knowledge.
- Poses possible how, why, and what-if questions to understand and/or interpret text.
- Explains and describes new concepts and information in own words.
- Understands the following parts of the sentence: subject, predicate, modifier.
- Uses text for a variety of functions, including literary, informational, and practical.
- Discriminates between cause and effect relationships.
- Summarizes and records information. Notes and charts detail.
- Supports ideas by reference to evidence presented in texts.
- Compares and contrasts poems, informational selections, or other literary selections.
- Distinguishes between fact and opinion.
- Reads literary, informational, and practical materials for a variety of purposes.
- Uses multiple strategies to confirm word meaning.
- Focuses on detail to locate specific information and to clarify meaning.
- Checks for understanding by paraphrasing information from text.

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Spelling and Writing Competencies

Kindergarten

- ☐ Represents spoken language with temporary and/or conventional spelling.
- ☐ Demonstrates understanding of literary language (e.g., "once upon a time," variety of sentence patterns).
- ☐ Writes most letters of the alphabet.
- ☐ Writes and/or participates in writing behaviors.

First Grade

- ☐ Writes all upper and lower case letters of alphabet.
- ☐ Uses phonics knowledge and basic patterns (e.g., an, ee, ake) to spell correctly three- and four-letter words.
- ☐ Applies phonics to write independently, using temporary and/or conventional spelling.
- ☐ Uses basic punctuation and basic capitalization.
- ☐ Composes a variety of products (e.g., stories, journal entries, letters).

Second Grade

- ☐ Correctly spells, using previously studied words and spelling patterns in one's own writing.
- ☐ Represents with appropriate letters all the sounds of a word when writing.
- ☐ Begins to use formal language and/or literary language in place of oral language patterns, as appropriate.
- ☐ Plans and makes judgments about what to include in written products.
- ☐ With guided discussion, revises to clarify and refine writing.
- ☐ Given help with organization, writes structured, informative presentations and narratives.
- ☐ Attends to spelling, mechanics, and format for final products in one's own writing.

Third Grade

- ☐ Demonstrates and uses prewriting strategies (drawing, brainstorming, webbing, or story-boarding).
- ☐ Revises by adding and/or deleting for elaboration/clarification.
- ☐ Self-assesses own writing.
- ☐ Uses paragraphs to organize information.
- ☐ Uses concepts of order and time.
- ☐ Uses vocabulary, ideas, themes, and language structure from books in own writing.
- ☐ Writes a variety of literary, informational, and practical texts (fairy tale, poetry, recipes, news article, interviews, etc.)
- ☐ Writes to support ideas with reference to evidence presented in text.
- ☐ Demonstrates voice, sense of audience, purpose.

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Notes

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